

What is Dead

I write this as an apology to those who are affected by my mistakes. I hope that you can find it in your hearts to forgive me, though I will understand if you can't.

My wife was terminally ill and, a few month ago, she died. I was very sad at the loss as she was a marvellous, caring woman. She was kind, and everyone that met her said their lives were better for it. I couldn't bear the pain though, so I did something terrible.

I will not tell you how I did it or how I learned to, for enough damage has been done, but I found a way to ... bring her back. To raise her from the dead. I could no longer bear to be alone, and I made a terrible mistake in my loneliness.

When I finished the ritual, nothing happened. Not at first, anyway. I was about to re-bury her when I first started to hear breathing. With an understandable measure of joy, I realised that the sound was emanating from her mouth. I had done it. At the time I could not fully understand what 'it' was, but, in my blissful ignorance, I carried her home.

She was not the same. She was no longer caring, but a primal, instinctive beast. She howled and screamed, snarled at me whenever I passed. I was worried, not for my own sake but for hers. She could escape. She could go out and do something to get hurt.

Let the record show that it was for her own good that I locked her in my basement. I never meant to keep her that way. I never knew that my actions would set a chain reaction of unfathomable horrors into action.

I kept her there for as long as I could, but her screams grew more and more desperate. I was chilled to my very core by the screams of my betrothed, and before long I stood on the rain slick precipice of insanity. I needed to do something.

As it so happened, I was not the only one to hear the screams. My

neighbours began to show interest, eventually sneaking onto my estate to snoop around. I caught them in the act, and as I had no explanation for what they may have seen, I attacked them. I didn't kill them, but they were unable to leave of their own accord and, as I feared the consequences of letting them go, I locked them in the basement with my wife.

This was my second mistake. The first, of course, being that I raised her in the first place.

That night I knew the sound of crunching bone.

Upon my awakening in the morning, I went down to check on the neighbours. One was gone, the other was wide eyed, cowering in the corner and covered in blood. Something else was off, too, though at first I did not know what. Then it hit me. The screams had subsided. My wife was asleep.

She had fed, and now she slumbered. All this time, the screams were of hunger. I shut the door, and went to lie down.

She lasted a few more days, obviously feasting on the other neighbour. It seemed that she only needed to eat once every few days.

Now, I'm not proud of what I did next, but I didn't know what else to do.

I went out at night every few days, around the time that only a few people would still be around. I stalked the streets and attacked people who walked alone. I would take them back to my wife and leave them in the basement. I would often wake from my slumber to hear their screams, cries for help. This would always rouse the beast and would never last longer than a minute or so. 10 minutes of crunching and gurgling pleas later the deed would be done and I could rest easy for another few days.

Although I did now kill anyone, I may as well have. It was my actions that brought about the deaths of so many, and my actions

that robbed so many of loved ones, of closure. How many torn and bloodied rags did I have to burn? How many personal affects were destroyed by my hands? I lost track of the numbers, but surely even one is too high a number!

I was kept awake the its screams – and it shall henceforth be referred to as ‘it’, for I have come to the conclusion that this monster is NOT my beloved – so I fed it. A night of rest for the lives of so many.

Day by day it grew stronger, its strength either increasing or returning, for I know not what horrible beast is now in possession of my wife’s body, and as time went on I was forced to bring home more food. Bigger people. Men. 2 women. A woman and a man. Eventually it was eating a full grown man every day.

I knew, in some dark corner of my mind I knew that this could not go on forever. I could not keep taking people. I was in danger of being caught, and, though I deserved to be, fear took hold of me and that, I suppose, is why I let that charade go on for as long as it did. So I decided to flee.

I had just packed my bags when I heard a knock on my door. The police had found a trail of blood leading through the woods up to my estate and were inquiring as to whether I’d seen or heard anything suspicious. I managed to keep a cool head and talk my way out of what could have potentially been a very unpleasant situation.

I know not why, only that I deserved it. It began to scream. It screamed louder than I had ever heard it scream before, and it sounded mad. The police instantly drew their guns and went in, thinking perhaps some horrific predatory beast had made its way into my home. They eventually found my basement door and threw it open. Slowly, ever so slowly, they descended the stairs. I was at a loss for what to do, so I did the only thing I could think of in the heat of the moment.

I shut the door.

Throwing the bolt across, I ran to my quarters and grabbed my bags, making for the door. The screams of the police haunt me to this very day.

I heard the sound of splintering wood as that ... thing ... burst out of its cell. It was now loose in the house.

I ran as fast as my legs could carry me out of there, out into the streets of the town I had stalked, into a train and I left that place far behind.

My old home is a ghost town now. Splashed with blood, yet no bodies remain. How I long to return to my estate, to gather up all of my research and burn it so that this might never happen again. I have made many an attempt to do so, in fact, though every time I get near I hear that beast's wild howls, screaming for flesh.

I know it haunts my home now. I know it wears my wife's skin, but the worst part of all this?

I let it happen.